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# STRESS LEVEL ASSESSMENT AMONG DENTISTS IN ADJARA DURING COVID-19

# MARIAM GOGOTISHVILI

BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY, BATUMI, GEORGIA

## TINATIN GORGILADZE

BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY, BATUMI, GEORGIA

## MZIA BAKRADZE

BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY, BATUMI, GEORGIA

## NATO ZOSIDZE

BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY, BATUMI, GEORGIA

# TAMAR PESHKOVA

BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY, BATUMI, GEORGIA

## NINO GOGEBASHVILI

TBILISI STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, TBILISI, GEORGIA

#### Abstract:

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 had a great impacton doctors who were overwhelmed by the over- flow of patients and the work load. According to M.Zhang's research, like other professionals dentists also were at high risk for infection. There is not enough research to prevent psychological risk factors during a pandemic, which explains the purpose of our survey. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psycho-emotional state of the dentists in the Adjara Region, Georgia. The survey was conducted in 2021 among the dentists in Adjara Region, Georgia. 273 dentists aged 20 to 65 participated in the research. PSS- 10 was used to assess the level of perceived stress,work overload, and resistance to stress and PDI-to evaluate the level of distress associated with the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll most heavily on the adult respondents in the over- 45age group. The survey has identified stress-provoking factors too.

**Keywords**: Dentists in the Adjara Region; Psycho-emotional; Georgia; Pandemic; Stress-provoking factors.

#### INTRODUCTION:

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 had a great impact on doctors who were overwhelmed by the overflow of patients and the workload, and also often there was no way for social distancing. Rapid changes in protocols and care for infected colleagues also laid stress on physicians (Walton M, Murray E, Christian MD,2020) During the pandemic in China, a high percentage of stress and anxiety was revealed among healthcare workers. Symptoms manifesting stress equaled 50% and anxiety - 44, 7%. (Lai J, Ma S, Wang Y, et al. 2020). According to M. Zhang's research, in the State of Washington in 2020, 15 professions with a high risk of infection were identified. Among them were dentists (Zhang, 'M. 2021). During the pandemic, 64% of dentists provided only primary emergency care to acute patients. 58.5% of dentists received patients without any assistance (Faccini M, Ferruzzi F, Mori AA, Santin GC, Oliveira RCG, et al. 2020). COVID-19-related anxiety and perceived stress due to insecurity was reported by a large number of dentists from various countries (Zhang WR, Wang K, Yin L, Zhao WF, et al. 2020). In 2021, according to Sarapultseva's research, distress was revealed in 21.9% of dentists, which was lower than the Indian data and higher than the Israeli data (Sarapultseva M. Sarapultsev A. 2021). There is still not enough research to prevent psychological risk factors during a pandemic. In this regard, no research has been conducted in our country yet, which explains the purpose of our study.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psycho-emotional state of the dentists in the Adjara region, Georgia

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was conducted in 2021 among the dentists in Adjara Region, Georgia. 273 dentists aged 20 to 65 participated in the research (38.92+11.28). Of these, 198 were women (73.53%) and 75 were men (27.47%). Respondents were divided into three groups by age. 130 participants were from 20 to 35 years old - young

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group, 73 people in the middle age group were from 36 to 45 years old, and 70 respondents were over 45. Dentists of all profiles participated in the survey.

To determine the level of the effect of stress and work overload and to identify the resistance of dental healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, we used a special ten-point-scale scale -10, which was adapted to the Adjara region.

To determine the level of distress, a questionnaire was filled out "COVID-19 Peritraumatic Distress Index (CPDI)" which is widely used to assess psychological stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire has four scales: psychological overload, physiological reaction, social condition, and peritraumatic distress. At the research stage, we used the questionnaire to reveal precipitating risk factors that caused destructive changes. The difference in data in all three study groups was assessed using the Kruskal–Wallis test criterion, and the relationship was determined according to Spearman's Rank Correlation (Table 1, Table 2).

#### Results

The overall level of stress perceived was very high in all research groups. The data worsened with age. 6.9% of the total number of respondents belonged to the young research group, and 95.7% of dentists belonged to the elderly research group.

#### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll most heavily on the adult respondents in the over-45 age group who were taking part in the survey. The survey has identified stress-provoking factors as a result of the pandemic, which should be considered for stress prevention for dentists to avoid psychological problems during different pandemics in the future.

### **APPLICATION FORM N1**

to identify stress factors that cause destructive changes

#### Dear dentist

You are invited to participate in a survey that is anonymous and does not require identification.

The aim of our survey is to determine the level of stress among dentists during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify risk factors for further prevention. Analysis of the results will be presented at scientific conferences.

Your involvement is important to us!

Thank you very much for participating!

| Part 1 About your Professional Field            |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| C 1   | Female -  |  |  |  |
| Gender  | Male -  |  |  |  |
|   |   |  |  |  |
| Age   |   |  |  |  |
| What type of institution do you work at?        | Polyclinic -                                    |  |  |  |
|   | Private clinic -                                |  |  |  |
|   | other -   |  |  |  |
| When did you graduate from the university?      |   |  |  |  |
| Specify your area of specialization             | General Dental Practitioner -                   |  |  |  |
|   | Dental Surgeon -                                |  |  |  |
|   | Dental Prosthodontist -                         |  |  |  |
|   | Orthodontist -                                  |  |  |  |
|   | Pediatric Dentist -                             |  |  |  |
|   | Maxillofacial Surgeon -                         |  |  |  |
| Specify your seniority experience               |   |  |  |  |
| Part 2 About Your Activities I                  | During the Pandemic                             |  |  |  |
|   |   |  |  |  |
|   | I worked regularly -                            |  |  |  |
| Did you work with notionts during the nondemic? | I rarely worked -                               |  |  |  |
| Did you work with patients during the pandemic? | I worked only in the first aid emergency care - |  |  |  |
|   | I didn't work because of the pandemic -         |  |  |  |
|   | No -  |  |  |  |
| Did the pandemic affect you?                    | Slightly -                                      |  |  |  |
|   | Mildly -  |  |  |  |
|   | The pandemic affected me strongly -             |  |  |  |
|   | The pandemic affected me very strongly -        |  |  |  |
|   | I do not know -                                 |  |  |  |
|   | Yes, it has decreased -                         |  |  |  |
| Has the flow of patients decreased?             | No, it has increased -                          |  |  |  |
|   | It has not changed -                            |  |  |  |



| Have you undergone the training for COVID-19 not know - Yes - 1 do not know - 1 do not |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Have you undergone the training or COVID-19 infection prevention during the pandemic?  I have not gone through the training - individual means of protection - utilization - special equipment for a dental office elaming after a patient leaves - infection control in the workplace - patient screening - other - o |  | I do not know -                                    |  |
| infection prevention during the pandemic?  I do not remember - I have not gone through the training - individual means of protection - utilization - social equipment for a dental office between patients - dental office cleaning after a patient leaves - infection control in the workplace - patient screening - other -  I'm ready - I'm not ready - I'm ready a fittle - I'm ready moderately - I'm ready moderately - I'm very well prepared - I don't know -  disposable surgical face mask - N95 mask - multi-use face mask - N95 mask - multi-use face mask - N95 mask - Disposable surgical mask - N95 mask - Disposable surgical mask - N95 mask - multi-use face mask - N95 mask - Disposable surgical mask - N95 mask - Dispo | Have you undergone the training for COVID-10     |  |  |
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| Disposable surgical mask+ reusable cloth mask Other -  Part 3 Structure of the Workplace  Did your dental workplace meet the requirements to admit an infected patient?  No - Yes - waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know -  De you test the natients before admission?  The structure of the Workplace No - Other - Take a history only -  | patients' mouths'?                               |  |  |
| Did your dental workplace meet the requirements to admit an infected patient?  No - Yes - waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  Take a history only -   |  |  |  |
| Part 3 Structure of the Workplace  Did your dental workplace meet the requirements to admit an infected patient?  No - Yes - waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know -  Other -  To you test the patients before admission?  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| Did your dental workplace meet the requirements to admit an infected patient?  No - Yes - waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  How do you get information about the pandemic?  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  To you test the patients before admission?  No - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know - Other - take a history only -   |  |  |  |
| Admit an infected patient?  Yes - waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know -  Other -  The yes take a history only -  waiting room only - waiting room on | 1  | 1  |  |
| waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know -  Do you test the patients before admission?  waiting room only - dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know - Other -  take a history only -  |  | No -   |  |
| dental treatment room only - yes, fully - I do not know -  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know -  Other -  Take a history only -   | admit an infected patient?                       | Yes -  |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  I do not know -  Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  I do not know - Other -  take a history only -  |  | waiting room only -                                |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  I do not know -  Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  I do not know - Other -  take a history only -   |  |  |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  No - Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - I do not know - Other - take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  Yes, but patient service prices have not increased - Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know - Other -  take a history only -   |  | I do not know -                                    |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  The description of the patients before admission?  |  |  |  |
| Did you have additional expenses due to the pandemic?  Yes, but patient service prices have also increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Do you test the patients before admission?  The description of the patients before admission?  |  | Yes, but patient service prices have not increased |  |
| pandemic?  I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  | Did you have additional and                      | <b>-</b>   |  |
| increased - I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -   |  | Yes, but patient service prices have also          |  |
| I do not know -  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -   | pandemic?  |  |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  How do you get information about the pandemic?  How do you get information about the pandemic?  I don't have access to it - from the website of dental associations - From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  How do you get information about the pandemic?  from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -   |  |  |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  How do you get information about the pandemic?  from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -   |  | I don't have access to it -                        |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  How do you get information about the pandemic?  From online resources literature - from blogs - from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| How do you get information about the pandemic?  from social sites - from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| from my colleagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  Take a history only -  |  |  |  |
| from my coneagues - from other professionals in the field of health care- I do not know - Other -  take a history only -   | How do you get information about the pandemic?   |  |  |
| care- I do not know - Other -  take a history only -   | _  |  |  |
| I do not know - Other -  take a history only -   |  | 1  |  |
| Other -  The year test the patients before admission?  take a history only -   |  |  |  |
| Do you test the natients before admission?   |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| fill out a special questionnaire for COVID 19 -  | Do you test the natients before admission?       |  |  |
|  | Do you test the patients before admission:       | fill out a special questionnaire for COVID 19 -    |  |



|   | take temperature - we ask the patient to take their temperature before the visit - before admitting patients, we ask them to use antimicrobial mouth rinse - other- |
|---|---|
| Are you afraid of getting infected?                           | Yes - No - Yes, very much - yes, a little - I do not know -   |
| Do you admit infected patients?                               | Yes -<br>no -<br>I do not know -  |
| Do you get tested regularly?                                  | Yes - Yes, I had a positive result - Yes, I had a negative result -   |
| Do you agree to carry out preventive measures in your region? | Yes - No - I don't care - I do not know -   |
| Thank you for participating!                                  |   |

TABLE N1. Prevalence of different perceived stress levels among dentists of various age groups according to the pss-10

| Age         | Scale | Median data in points | Below normal % | Above normal % | Kruskal-Wallis<br>Index |
|-------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
|             |       | 1                     |                |                | H-TEST                  |
| Aged 20-35  | PSS   | 18,53+4,04            | 93,08(n=121)   | 6,92(n=9)      |                         |
| N=130       | 0     | 11,15+3,21            | 78,46(n=102)   | 21,54(n=28)    | P<0,001                 |
|             | CS    | 7,38+2,67             | 88,46(n=115)   | 11,54(n=15)    |                         |
| Aged 36-45  | PSS   | 24,78+4,21            | 34,25(n=25)    | 65,75(n=48)    |                         |
| N=73        | 0     | 14,95+4,21            | 34,25(n=25)    | 65,75(n=48)    | P<0,001                 |
|             | CS    | 9,69+3,00             | 72,6 (n=53)    | 27,4(n=20)     |                         |
| Aged 45 and | PSS   | 29,51+3,73            | 4,29(n=3)      | 95,71(n=67)    |                         |
| above       | 0     | 18,03+5,04            | 14,29(n=10)    | 85,71(n=60)    | P<0,001                 |
| N=70        | CS    | 11,50+3,16            | 52,86(n=37)    | 47,14(n=33)    |                         |
|             |       |                       |                |                |                         |

PSS - perceived stress scale

O - overstrain

CS - counteraction to stress

The table shows statistically significant differences between different age groups according to the kruskal-wallis test

TABLE N2. Prevalence of various stress levels in dentists based on age according to the PDI

| Age      | Scale | Median data in | Normal stress  | Moderate    | Severe      | Kruskal-               |
|----------|-------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
|          |       | points         | (autostress) % | distress %  | distress %  | Wallis Index<br>H-TEST |
| Aged 20- | PDI   | 8,12+2,92      | 100 (n=130)    | 0           | 0           |                        |
| 35       | PO    | 3,86+1,94      | 100 (n=130)    | 0           | 0           | P<0,001                |
| N=130    | FR    | 0,55+0,80      | 100 (n=130)    | 0           | 0           |                        |
|          | P     | 3,71+2,24      | 100 (n=130)    | 0           | 0           |                        |
| Aged 36- | PDI   | 16,49+2,4      | 100(n=73)      | 0           | 0           |                        |
| 45       | PO    | 7,49+2,72      | 91,78(n=67)    | 8,22 (n=6)  | 0           | P<0,001                |
| N=73     | FR    | 1,60+1,78      | 98,63(n=72)    | 1,37(n=1)   | 0           |                        |
|          | P     | 7,40+2,45      | 69,86(n=51)    | 30,14(n=22) | 0           |                        |
| Aged     | PDI   | 34,01+12,60    | 42,86(n=30)    | 48,57(n=34) | 8,57(n=6)   |                        |
| above 45 | PO    | 17,47+6,35     | 15,71(n=11)    | 58,57(n=41) | 25,71(n=18) | P<0,001                |
| N=70     | FR    | 5,60+4,41      | 64,29(n=45)    | 28,57(n=20) | 7,14(n=5)   |                        |
|          | P     | 10,94+5,69     | 34,29(n=24)    | 54,29(n=38) | 11,43(n=8)  |                        |

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PDI- peritroumatic distress index PO - psychological overstrain FR - psychological reactions P- prosociality

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